SUMMARY OF THE OFFICE ACTION

The Office Action confirms the restriction of the claims as between claims 1-15 and 16-24.

The Office Action rejects all elected claims, claims 1-15.

Claims 1, 3, 5-6, 11 and 15 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by Grauzer, US Patent No. 6,588,750.

Claims 2, 4, 7-10 and 12-14 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Grauzer et al. US Patent No. 6,588,750, when further considered with Johnson (US Patent No. 6,676,127.

RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

Applicants confirm their previous election of claims 1-15 for prosecution on the merits and remove their traversal of the rejection.

REMARKS CONCERNING THE AMENDMENTS

The new claims find antecedent basis in the original specification, and, for example, in original claims 1-9.

Antecedent basis for the limitations of claims 33 and 34 may be found generally in the specification and, for example, page 6, lines 21-23; and page 5, lines 28-30, respectively.

RESPONSE TO THE REJECTIONS

The rejection under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by Grauzer, US Patent No. 6,588,750. The rejection is fairly and clearly presented in the office action. However, upon comparison of the independent claims with the disclosure of Grauzer et al., it can be readily seen that the rejection is in error. Below is a table in which the recitation of Claim 1 is analyzed with respect to Grauzer, below.

PRESENT CLAIM 1	GRAUZER '750	COMMENTS
1. (ORIGINAL) A device for shuffling cards comprising: a pre-shuffler; and a main shuffler,	**Grauzer clearly shows only a shuffler, without a preshuffler.**	The Examiner asserts that the card receiving area is a "preshuffling area."
the pre-shuffler comprising: a plurality of compartments for holding groups of playing cards to be shuffled;	There is no preshuffler or preshuffling function.	Note that claim 1 requires the preshuffler to have a plurality of compartments. The card receiving (input) tray does not.
and an output portion of the pre-shuffler,	The shuffler of Grauzer et al. has an output portion.	The receiving area outputs cards, but is not a preshuffler.
the output portion delivering one group of cards at a time to an input portion of the main shuffler,	The card receiving tray outputs one card at a time, not one group of cards.	The entire purpose and function of Grauzer requires delivery of a single card at a time, and never "groups of cards at a time" as recited.
the main shuffler for rearranging the order of cards input into the main shuffler and for outputting cards in a substantially random order.	**This is what the entire system of Grauzer does, without preshuffling.**	There is no preshuffling. There is no delivery to a main shuffler after outputting groups of cards.

It appears that the rejection attempts to interpret certain required steps in the function of the recited claim without the actual meaning and the intended meaning for those terms. Specifically, the terms "preshuffler," "delivering one group at a time," and "to an input section of the main shuffler" have not been given their required meaning and weight in analyzing the claims. It is therefore appropriate that a review of the invention and a comparison with Grauzer et al. be performed.

The present technology is a method of taking a first set of cards intended to be randomized, putting the cards into a first system which preshuffles or separates the first set of cards by

removing groups of cards at a time, and then moving the groups of cards as a group at a time into a main shuffler. The claim is absolutely clear on this point.

A dealer at a table, when using the preshuffler, might ordinarily operate as follows:

1) the dealer takes groups of cards to be shuffled and:

2) the dealer manually inserts small groups of cards into the a presorter on the preshufler, in effect manually performing a Scarne shuffle;

3) the order of cards within each group is then fed into the shuffler in a reverse order as compared to the order the cards appear in the presorter;

4) the delivery order of the groups of cards fed into the shuffler is then either sequential, random or some other programmed method, and can be considered a gross shuffle if the feeding is not sequential.

The important element to remember is that there are two distinct and separate manipulative operations. The first is a gross manipulation of relatively large sets of cards moved together to change the gross orientation of cards from the first set. After this gross manipulation, the cards are then riffled and shuffled to generate a true randomized set of playing cards. Although the gross manipulation would by itself never be sufficient within the gaming environment to act as a shuffle sufficient to deter memorization of card orders from the previous set of cards, this preshuffling is believed by some to assist in making it more difficult for a skilled cheat to infer a pattern of shuffled cards from a deck placed into an automated shuffler, merely by the gross deterioration of the initial order of the cards that are truly randomized.

The present claim, as noted above in the comparison with Grauzer, is:

1) a preshuffler in combination with a shuffler, while Grauzer at al. is solely a shuffler;
2) the preshuffler of the claims moves cards "**groups** at a time" from the input area, while Grauzer must move cards one-at-a-time from the input area;
3) the pre-shuffler has a plurality of compartments for holding multiple groups of playing cards to be shuffled, while Grauzer has a single compartment for holding a single group of cards to be shuffled and multiple cards to hold intermediate groups of randomized cards that have been shuffled;
4) the preshuffler has an output portion delivering one group of cards at a time **to an input portion of the main shuffler**; while Grauzer delivers the groups of shuffled cards in

the compartments to a single delivery tray, not into any further randomizing system; and

5) the preshuffler system using the main shuffler for rearranging the order of cards input into the main shuffler and for outputting cards in a substantially random order, as compared to Grauzer et al., which has completed the shuffling after moving cards one at a time to form groups of cards in internal compartments and then moving groups to a delivery tray.

The degree of difference between the claimed subject matter and the technology shown by Grauzer et al. is so fundamentally and structurally different as to nearly defy reasoned comparison. Claim 1 absolutely and clearly describes a device with **two distinct** card manipulation steps, preshuffling a set of cards by moving **groups of cards** and then moving the groups of cards into a main shuffler. Grauzer et al. is purely and simply a main shuffler. There is absolutely no way that the disclosure of Grauzer et al. discloses the invention as a whole recited in claim 1. The rejection is fundamentally and completely in error.

As every one of the claims in this rejection depends directly or ultimately from claim 1, each claim in this rejection cannot be anticipated by Grauzer et al., at least for the reason that the limitations of claim 1 are not anticipated.

The new group of claims (25-34) also are not anticipated by Grauzer et al. or obvious over Grauzer et al. in view of Johnson. These claims also require that the preshuffler deliver multiple cards as groups of cards to a main shuffler. These multiple cards are provided from the preshuffler to an input section of a main shuffler. Both Grauzer et al. and Johnson completely lack any consideration, disclosure, teaching or enablement of such a structure and function. The claims cannot be anticipated.

Claims 2, 4, 7-10 and 12-14 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Grauzer et al. ('750) in view of Johnson (US Patent No. 6,676,127). This rejection must fail at least for the reasons given above and because the Johnson reference fails to disclose any preshuffling event. In fact, Johnson tends to show organization of cards in a first individual card-moving step, and may enable later randomization through a second individual card-moving step.

A main purpose of the Johnson system is a device that can either organize cards into a sorted set (e.g., deck) of cards, sort multiple decks into separate and even ordered decks of cards, as well as providing a shuffling operation for one or more decks of cards.

Johnson describes the operation of the sorter/shuffler as follows:

1) a first set of cards is provided into a card supply area (12) (Abstract and Column 1, lines 60-63);
2) Individual playing cards are moved from the card supply and moved one-card-at-a-time as an identified card into a specific collector or storing means (column 1, line 63 through column 2, line 4);
3) After the cards (referred to as articles in portions of the Johnson description) are collated, all of the cards may be dumped into a collector tray or subsequently fed into one or more discrete groups (e.g., decks).

An important point to note is that each card is move one-at-a-time so that each card can be identified, each card is inserted as a known and identified card into a specific compartment in a collator, and each card is removed from the collator, either randomly or into a final set as a specific ordered array.

In the first mode, the device of Johnson does not act as a shuffler, but a sorting device. In the second mode, cards must be moved one-at-a-time and not in groups, if the cards are to be read. In this second mode, the Johnson system is a complete shuffling system, and both the movement of individual cards out of the input area and the random deployment of cards from the carousel consist of a shuffling step. There is no disclosure of preshuffling or moving a group of cards from the input area at a single time. In fact, the first step of moving and identifying cards in Johnson constitutes an element of an organizing step or at least an organizing facilitating step, and not a preshuffling step, if any independent function is attempted to be imposed upon that action.

Johnson fails to overcome the deficiencies noted in the Grauzer reference with regard to teaching the claimed subject matter. Neither reference shows a preshuffling step moving groups of cards, and neither reference shows moving groups of cards that have been preshuffled into a main shuffler. Both Grazuer and Johnson are main shufflers.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have completely and thoroughly traversed the rejections. All claims should be examined, the rejections removed and all claims allowed.

Respectfully submitted
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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this Transmittal Letter and the paper, as described herein, are being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on 12 June 2006

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Signature